

Interview with David E. L'Heureux

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

DAVID E. L'HEUREUX

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is April 24, 1992. This is an interview with David E. L'Heureux on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. This interview is going to be concentrated on Mr. L'Heureux's experiences as a relatively junior officer in consular affairs. To begin with I wonder if you could give me a bit about your background—where you came from and grew up?

L'HEUREUX: I was born into the Foreign Service. My father was originally a non-career Foreign Service officer in 1927. I was born in 1928. So my entire life has been Foreign Service. I was with him until I went into the Foreign Service in 1949 and have been in the Foreign Service since then.

Q: Where were you born?

L'HEUREUX: I was born in Washington, DC My father was stationed in Windsor at the time. His first ten years in the Foreign Service were at one of our “hardship” posts overseas, Windsor, Canada. My mother was from Washington and my father from New Hampshire. She returned to stay with her mother in Washington while she had me. She

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also returned to have my sister two years later. But for my brother, she gave up and had him in Windsor.

So I have been living primarily the “visa life” with my father the whole time. That was his main career interest in the early years. During the war he was Chairman of a special wartime visa board that had to pass on alien immigrants coming into the United States. After the War, from about 1947 to 1952, he was Director of the Visa Office. At that time, he was the only Foreign Service officer to have had his tour of office in Washington extended by a special Act of Congress because they wanted to keep him here as Director of the Visa Office. So visas were kind of in my blood.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1949 as a clerk.

Q: First, where did you go to high school?

L'HEUREUX: We lived in Windsor until the end of 1936 at which time my father was transferred to Stuttgart, Germany. We lived there, under Hitler, until, I believe it was December, 1939 when he was asked to go on detail to Antwerp. That detail eventually became a regular assignment. We were in Antwerp on the morning of May 10, 1940 when the Germans entered the Benelux countries. My mother, brother, sister and I fled Belgium, and through France, to the Bordeaux area where we stayed for a short while in Biarritz and then Arcachon, until we finally left for the United States on the last American passenger ship out of Europe, the SS America. There is a whole story on that exodus, including the ship being stopped by a German submarine, the attempt to torpedo it, our being put in life boats, sailing through mine fields, and the whole saga.

We came back to Washington where we remained until 1945. During that time my father remained in Antwerp for some time. Then he was transferred to Lisbon and eventually to Washington for a short stay. Later in the War he served under General Eisenhower, and was Bob Murphy's deputy in Algiers. Later he replaced Bob Murphy as Chief Civil Administrator for North and West Africa on General Eisenhower's staff. He then returned to

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Washington to the Visa Division and in 1945 he was sent to reopen the Consulate General in Marseille.

We joined him in Marseille several months later, in June 1945, when families were permitted to travel to Europe. He was there for two years. I just stayed for the Summer. I wrote a book on my experiences during that Summer of 1945, claiming to be the only American citizen to have vacationed in Europe in the Summer of 1945 when the War had just ended in Europe and was coming to an end in the Pacific. It was sort of a diary of my experiences. At the end of the Summer I went back to Washington to complete my high school. I had been attending St. John's College High School in Washington. It was down at 1225 Vermont Ave. NW, and now it is located on Military Road in N. W. Washington.

In 1946 I graduated from high school and returned to Marseille where I stayed a year during the second half of my father's tour. I took pre-med at the University of Aix-Marseille, with the intention of becoming a doctor. I returned to Washington with the family in 1947 and enrolled in Georgetown. I tried to get into the Medical School but they would not recognize credits from France because the exchange of credits program had not been setup yet so I got no recognition for having completed my pre-med in France and was put in the BS program in Georgetown. I survived for two years but wasn't getting what I wanted. I became rather disillusioned.

In 1949 at Easter time I remember my father asking, "Things are not going well in school, do you have anything in mind as to what you would like to do?" I said, "No, I am not sure what I want to do. But one thing I am sure of is that I do not want to join the Foreign Service. I've had it."

In June, 1949, about three months later, school was out and I went to my father and said, "How do I get into the Service?" So I went to the office with him one day and asked what I should do. He said, "There are two ways of getting in. One is I could call the chief of Personnel and have you sworn in as a young staff vice consul." I asked, "What is the other

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way?” He said, “Well, you can go down to the Foreign Service Lounge to a man by the name of Marvin Will (a man who had been there for many, many years), and tell him you would like to join the Foreign Service. You would take the typing test and whatever else is necessary and come in as a clerk. And then you will be on your own.”

I was adamant that I was not going to hang onto my father's shirt tails so I went down to Marvin's office. I flunked the typing test three times. I took it in the old red brick FSI building, where the C St. entrance to the Department now is. I finally passed the typing test...I think it was 35 words a minute...and came into the Service as a clerk.

My first job was working with Tobias (Toby) Boyd who ran something similar to FARA (Foreign Service Recreation Association). It was actually a Foreign Service program where people from overseas could write in and say they needed a new set of luggage, a refrigerator, etc. and information and prices would be sent to them. We would then buy the items they ordered and arrange for shipping. We were sort of a broker for things that were available in the United States but were not available overseas.

I worked there for a couple of months. Then I was told that I was going to be assigned to China. I assumed the reason they had selected me to go to China was that I spoke French and German and I was a bachelor at the time.

Q: Being a bachelor was very important for some of the hardship assignments.

L'HEUREUX: I did all my buying and got ready to go to China. Several days before I was due to leave I was called in and told that the assignment had been cancelled, that they had had an urgent request for help from the Displaced Persons Program in Germany, which is now known as the Refugee Program, and that I would be going to Germany. I asked where I was going to be assigned. They said that I was to report to the Displaced Persons headquarters in Frankfurt and they would assign me from there.

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In those days the whole structure in Germany was a duplication of the Foreign Service. It was a small Foreign Service. You were assigned to Germany and the personnel people in Germany determined where you were going to go. You were their “property” while you were in Germany. You could only be transferred out of Germany once they released you back to the “central system”. It was a completely autonomous operation.

So I went to Frankfurt and was assigned to the Displaced Persons camp in Butzbach, Germany, which is about an hour north of Frankfurt. Because the camp was an old German military barracks compound and Butzbach was a very small farm village there was no housing there for anybody, we were housed in Bad Nauheim which is about ten kilometers away. We were put into requisitioned military hotels. They had requisitioned, I think it was, three hotels in Bad Nauheim, which was a famous health resort before the War (and again after the War).

I worked at Butzbach for about a year. We were driven in a little military Volkswagen beetle to work every morning and then come back at night.

The barracks were old primitive barracks with meter-thick stone walls, heavy plank wood floors, probably about 12-foot ceilings and heated by potbelly stoves in one corner of the room. One of my jobs was to keep the place heated. I would come in in the morning and get the fire going. Throw some coal on and get it to where the stove would glow red and the room would become very hot. Then the thermostat system (me) would go over and open the window and cool it down. Once the redness was gone and the room became a little cool I would close the windows and stoke the fire again. It was an all day process.

We had a complete visa office there. There was a medical division with doctors who would examine the visa applicants. INS had an inspector there who would pre-clear people. We would go to the International Refugee Organization and get a list of names. Our Displaced Persons Commission was there too, as well as all the voluntary agencies.

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We would get names from the IRO of people interested going to the United States. The Displaced Persons Commission would process them for placement and support (usually through the voluntary agencies) and turn them over to us. We would medically exam them. Of course our laws required that they have birth certificate, marriage certificate, police clearances from places they have lived. Most of these people had fled from the Baltic states. Many in this camp were from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and some from Poland. They had no documentation, they had nothing. So there was an office that the IRO had developed where they could go in and create documents by swearing out a statement and having it notarized. We accepted that as being the best evidence available. Then we would conduct an interview. They had to pass a literacy test. Eventually we would issue the visa and they would be herded into trains and sent up to Bremen and transported to the United States.

One of the problems with our system at that time was that it took months to process these people. In the meantime, there were other foreign countries represented there. Just above us in the barracks was the Australian consul and his secretary. We had about 20-22 people in our process. As a matter of fact I created a photographic processing picture which I still have...a series of pictures glued together showing all the different stages of our process.

I went up one day to see the Australian consul to see how he worked. He obtained names from the IRO. He would call the family in. They would walk in the door. I remember one interview...a man and his wife and three kids walked in. The consul looked at him and said, "Don't you take your hat off when you walk into an office?" He said, "Sorry Mr. Consul." And took off his hat. "What have you done before?" "Well, I have farmed." "What type of farming?" "Wheat." "Tell me a little about wheat farming?" This was all through an interpreter. He explained a little about the process. Then the consul said, "Come over here. Let me see your hands. Yes, they look like farmer's hands. Could you roll up one of your sleeves? You look healthy. Have you had any medical problems recently?" "No,

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no.” “Is the family all healthy?” “Yes, we have had no problems.” “Okay, you are going to Australia. Next.”

So what they were doing was getting the cream of the crop. People who would apply to several countries, the Australians would get the cream right there because they would move them through in one day. We took several months.

I spent a year there in the camp.

Q: Did you find that you were having problems with people associated with accusations of war crimes? A number of people from the Baltic states were involved in running what amounted to minor little concentration camps.

L'HEUREUX: Yes, they went through a security check. What we did was to use the military, CID, organization to screen all of these people. That was part of our processing. They would run a name check on them to see if they had any record of Nazi activities or anything like that. If they did they were not accepted. We turned down quite a few people.

When I went out there I was the junior clerk in that office and when I left I was the senior clerk, pretty much running the office because in the 12 months that I was there I had 13 bosses. It was a training post and they were running Foreign Service career officers through there fairly regularly. I became the expert. I ran the office, so to speak, as a clerk.

A year later in August, 1950 they decided to close the camp and move all the processing for that area to Schweinfurt. So I took all the records and packed them up and took them out to Schweinfurt. I spent a week in Schweinfurt turning everything over to the staff there and then went into Frankfurt to work in the visa section, where I started doing normal visa work.

One little anecdote; in Butzbach when I first arrived, I was placed in an office with two attractive young German girls. Even though I had lived in Germany and was fairly fluent in

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German I was very timid. I didn't like to use my German or admit that I spoke it. I kind of enjoyed sitting in this office listening to these two young ladies talking about some of their activities outside of the office and then eventually starting to make comments about me. After about a week or so of this and painfully trying to speak to me in English, one morning I came in and one of them asked the other how the night had been. She said that it was okay, pretty quiet. But she said, "You know, I sure would like to wake up one morning and find Mr. L'Heureux' shoes under my bed." I couldn't resist at that point...I have a pretty keen sense of humor. So, I mustered my best German and turned to her and said, "I would be very happy to put my shoes under your bed at any time." You could hear a pin drop in that office for about ten days afterwards. Absolute silence. Nobody said a word. Gradually things softened up and I began speaking German with the staff.

Q: Were there any pressures on the operation there to issue more visas?

L'HEUREUX: Tremendous pressure. The pressure primarily was coming from the US voluntary agencies. They were sending people out constantly from their headquarters, primarily in New York and Washington.

Q: These would be the Tolstoy Foundation, HIAS, National Catholic Welfare Conference....

L'HEUREUX: Yes, all of those groups. They would put me under a lot of pressure because they knew I was the key person in moving things through there. Word got around very quickly. I was under a lot of pressure to speed up the process. They would appeal cases that the vice consul had turned down. I won't identify the faith, but there was a very well known senior official from one particular faith in New York who came out. He got me aside one day over lunch and he did his darndest to convince me that the only reason that laws were written were to be broken. He said there was no other reason. He went on that laws were written to be violated, and get the job done. Fortunately I had a good solid Christian background and was able to deal with this. But this was the type of mentality I occasionally had to deal with. They would try anything to move people into the United States. While I

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was very sympathetic in trying to get people out of Europe, I did feel we had to comply with the laws that our Congress passed.

In 1950 I was transferred to Frankfurt. I was the chief clerk in the Visa Section there for a while. During that time I also became the office expert on adoptions of Germans. I would advise Americans on adoption procedures, where to find children, etc. I had some rather interesting cases there. There was one very attractive American Caucasian couple who came in to see about adopting a German youngster. It turned out that the man was an airline pilot. He was out of town most of the time. They were based in Frankfurt. He felt it would be good for his wife to have a child to take care of to keep her busy, etc. The next time they came in he was on a flight and she came in with the youngster that they wanted to adopt...a striking blond, 17 year old German, and they walked into my office holding hands. I couldn't stop it, everything was legitimate, but it was very obvious what the situation was. He wanted her to have companionship and she had a different notion on what kind of companionship, I guess.

Anyway, there were several cases like that. There was one of an Irish Sergeant in the military who had nine children. He had never been to the United States. He was born in Ireland and joined the US military in England during the war and had acquired citizenship through that process. He was serving in Germany and hoping eventually to be stationed in the United States to see what the country he now belonged to looked like. He and his wife came in saying that with all these children it was too much of a burden on her and they wanted to adopt a young German girl to help them raise the family and help around the house. The next time they came into the office, he came in with a 16 year old German girl, very attractive, and they came into the office hand in hand. It was very difficult to try to deal with that because you knew there was something going on, you knew it was wrong, but you couldn't touch it.

I was also involved in getting a visa for the nursemaid to the children of Major Draper, who had been Eisenhower's personal pilot in Europe, and when Eisenhower became President

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he asked Draper to come back and be his pilot at the White House. His wife was back in the States with the children and they wanted to bring this German woman over to take care of the family. I arranged for the visa. Several months after she arrived in the United States, I read where he had divorced his wife and married the maid.

After about a year in Frankfurt, I was promoted and commissioned as a non-career staff vice consul. I was moved to the visa issuing line where I came across many fascinating new situations.

There was the mentally ill woman who kept coming in to me trying to get a visa to the United States. I had been told by a psychiatrist on the outside that she carried a gun in her purse. She sort of picked me as her favorite and would come in about once a month to sit down and have a long talk with me. I had to be very careful not to irritate her because I knew she had a gun in her purse. I was able to eventually gain her confidence and get her to ask for help. She was put into an institution in Wiesbaden.

Q: How did you find the German staff?

L'HEUREUX: Excellent. From the female pipe smoking file clerk I had working for me in the file room to the receptionist and those who processed the papers, they were all excellent. Really top notch people. I really enjoyed being with them. There were a couple of employees who had been with the Consulate before the War. One was a fellow by the name of Westfahl who had actually operated an underground for us in Frankfurt during the war. He would ride his motorcycle around town collecting information and passing it to American intelligence people.

Q: He ran the file room didn't he?

L'HEUREUX: Yes.

Q: I knew him when I was there in 1955.

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L'HEUREUX: There was another institution there, a fellow by the name of Mr. Spyglass.

Q: Oh, yes, Homer Spyglass.

L'HEUREUX: He is married to a German lady and called her "his lady." A fabulous singer. I think he died on the job.

Q: He did. He died about 1956 or so.

HEUREUX: A wonderful man.

Q: He was a black soldier who stayed on after World War I.

L'HEUREUX: Yes. He knew everything that there was to be known in the area. He was the center of attention at every party.

Then in 1952 I was told I was being transferred to Port Elizabeth, South Africa. My assignment there was carried in the Biographic Register for a while, but I never got there. I decided at that point to express some of my rebellious attitude, I was still young enough to be a rebel. I decided I was going to marry a German girl. The Foreign Service would not approve the marriage and at that point I resigned from the Foreign Service and went back and took a job in the Visa Office in Washington as a Civil Service employee.

I remained there for five years until my wife became an American citizen at which time we had what was called the Wriston Program. I applied under the Wriston Program and was integrated back into the Foreign Service.

Q: Can we go back to the Visa Office now? I think it is very interesting to get a feel for the spirit of what you were doing because this was a major time. A new act was coming in, the McCarran-Walter Act and all. What were you doing in the Visa Office?

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L'HEUREUX: Initially I was working on security advisory opinions. Cases where people had been involved or suspected of being involved in Nazi or communist activities. The post would send the complete case to us to review in order to determine whether there was sufficient evidence for inadmissibility. We didn't get the clear cut cases, we got the questionable ones. I worked there under a fellow by the name of Tommy Valenza, who had originally been a courier and had worked his way into visa work.

I spent about two or three years on that and then I took over visa frauds. With no investigative or security background I was asked to take over this problem.

Q: To go back to security advisory opinions, how did this work? You would get a report from the field which often wouldn't tell you everything you wanted to know. How were these processed?

L'HEUREUX: Well, we would use sources here in the United States to gather additional information. We would run checks on people. Sometimes we would have to go back to the post to try to get more information. We had quite a broad latitude of investigative authority. We could go to other posts if the person came from another country, to see if they had anything on him. The tendency at the time was to err on behalf of the US government. If it was a borderline case, we would deny the visa rather than take a chance. We worked closely with the FBI and other information resources.

Q: What kind of cases would you say were the predominant ones you were dealing with?

L'HEUREUX: At that time there were a lot of suspected Nazis where records were not available or not complete, there were just suspicions. People may have made allegations to the Consulate about somebody they knew was going to the United States. Some of them were malicious, some of them were factual. There were also a number of those with possible communist affiliation. If you had belonged to a communist front organization when you were 10 years old, you were excluded. So it was a matter of looking carefully into the

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case, trying to search out every possible avenue and then come to a conclusion. There three of us doing this work under Tommy Valenza. Frank Walters and Charlie McCaskill were the other two. We also had with us for a short time the son-in-law of Jack Horner, Bob Horner. Jack used to be a White House correspondent. Bob later became one of the Commissioners of the Civil Service Commission. He left the Foreign Service and did quite well.

Q: Were you feeling any of the winds that were going through the State Department during the McCarthy period?

L'HEUREUX: Very definitely, yes.

Q: How did these....?

L'HEUREUX: There was a lot of pressure coming from upstairs, we were not getting it directly from the Hill. It filtered down through channels. That is why we erred on behalf of the United States. If there was a question that could not be clarified, then we would exclude the person.

Q: Going back looking at it, did you have the feeling that if you passed this particular case, some one might come and ask why you did that?

L'HEUREUX: We weren't too concerned about that because every decision we made had to be endorsed by our boss. So there were two people looking at everything. We couldn't have been singled out as having made an error. The office could be condemned and my boss was called on the carpet a few times for some of the decisions that we had jointly arrived at.

Q: Then you moved over to the fraud side. This later became a growth industry, but at that time, 1955...

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L'HEUREUX: At that time we had not really addressed fraud in the Visa Office. We had a person who was supposed to be handling this, but never really did an effective job and was later terminated. Fraud was being handled primarily by the security people in State. We were in the 515 22nd St Annex at the time, which was then SA-11. In that building was the Visa Office and the Office of Security. Upstairs on the top floor of the building was a three-man fraud unit dealing primarily with visa frauds, but also with other types of irregularities in the Foreign Service.

One of the jobs I had was to rustle the visa frauds away from them. To use them as a resource, but to take the primary responsibility back to the Visa Office where it belonged.

Our major fraud concern at that time was Hong Kong. Actually one of those three people was eventually, I think in 1956, assigned to Hong Kong to establish a security office there to handle fraud investigations.

While I was in the office cleaning up a mess of a backlog, I was looking for patterns. I saw where there was a potentially more serious problem than the Chinese problem coming out of Cuba. It was centered primarily in the New York area. I started collecting documents and information on this problem and eventually was able to go to New York and present the whole issue to a grand jury which indicted a number of Cubans in New York. The upshot of it was that they broke up what probably could have been a larger visa fraud operation than the Chinese one.

Q: What type of people were being brought in?

L'HEUREUX: Primarily people from the Caribbean. Producing false documents, support papers and even visas. Prices were very high, they were living very well. They were really milking people throughout the islands.

Q: When the people came in were they made almost slave labor?

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L'HEUREUX: Yes, they were completely subjected to the people who had sold them the visas and collected the fees. The operators were building a large structure not only in New York, but it was the beginning of the Cuban population in Miami. We were not completely effective in putting a stop to it, but in breaking the back of what was developing into a very large and sophisticated operation. I was working on the Chinese fraud as well, but focusing more on the Cuba problem because I felt I had a better handle on that.

Then in 1956, when my wife was naturalized and I was back in the Foreign Service, I was assigned to Manila.

Q: I want to get back to one thing about the Visa Office when you were there. This was pretty much a Civil Service organization, wasn't it?

L'HEUREUX: Yes, except my boss Tommy Valenza was Foreign Service. Frank Walters was Civil Service. Charlie McCaskill was Foreign Service.

Q: But I was thinking about at the top.

L'HEUREUX: At the top level in the Visa Office, the tradition was that the director was Foreign Service and the deputy director, Joe Alexander was Civil Service. He had been in the job for many years. In fact, he was Mr. Visa himself. He actually wrote all the legislation on the Hill. Frank Auerbach was there. He wrote a wonderful book on immigration, which was used for many years as a text book for training purposes. Joe Chapel was there. Joe later went out as Consul General to Hong Kong, but he was Civil Service at the time he was in the Visa Office. All the deputies were Civil Service. There were three of them. But the director of the Visa Office was Foreign Service.

Q: Why don't you talk about working under Auerbach. He was quite a name in the Service.

L'HEUREUX: He was very Germanic, a real task master, a no nonsense type of person. He wrote a book on...

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Q: He wrote THE book.

L'HEUREUX: He was a wonderful person really. Down through it all he was warm. He loved his work, the Visa Office. He was very dedicated to his superiors. But a tough person to work for.

Q: How did you feel about Congress? What was the influence of the members of Congress on the work you were doing?

L'HEUREUX: We didn't feel it so much at my level. We were about four or five levels down. Most of the Congressional contacts were at the director and deputy director level. They were under tremendous pressure. We got some fallout but not a great deal.

Q: This, of course, was the period of the great flow from Europe.

L'HEUREUX: Yes.

Q: Which meant that the families that were receiving them were well plugged into Congress.

L'HEUREUX: And there were a lot of immigration lawyers.

Q: I think it is interesting to understand the feeling of people in the Visa Office...how did you feel about immigration lawyers?

L'HEUREUX: We didn't like them. We called them shyster visa lawyers. They were basically out of the New York area and they had no morals, principles. They would do anything they could to get their client in. We had a very low regard for them. They were a thorn in our side. They would pick up the phone and call at any level in the Visa Office. We had an information office headed at the time by Louise Serrin , who was another institution around there. As a matter of fact Louise Serrin can be seen on nice days across from the State Department feeding the pigeons. A wonderful lady who has been retired for a

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number of years. We tried to funnel all these inquiries through this one office and were basically told not to talk to people ourselves. If it was something legitimate it would come to us through channels.

Q: Then you left and went to Manila where you were consul officer.

L'HEUREUX: Manila was a fascinating assignment. I arrived in December, 1956. As a matter of fact, I believe we spent Christmas on the high seas...three weeks by passenger ship to get there from Los Angeles.

From a consular standpoint I had probably just about everything that could happen to a consular officer happen to me during my two years in Manila. When I arrived there I was put in charge of Special Consular Services which is now Citizen Services...protection, welfare, whereabouts, notarials, deaths, estates, etc. I walked into a backlog of work. I found two file cabinets filled with unanswered correspondence.

Once I got that place in shape the Consul General had determined that there were some concerns in Passport and Citizenship so I was moved over there and put in charge of that office to get that straightened out.

The last nine months or so of my tour in Manila I was in charge of Visas where they were also having problems.

So during my two years I headed all three major elements and was basically a trouble shooter in each one.

Most of my experiences that are probably of interest to the general public were in the Special Consular Services area..protection, welfare, whereabouts and death cases.

There was one case where I clearly was compelled to violate the law. On MacArthur's staff before the War he had an Air Force officer, Captain Pappy Gunn. Pappy was a pilot, a bomber pilot. He was there with his family. At the time the War broke out he was assigned

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to one of the southern islands. He had moved his family down there. When the Japanese came into the Philippines, Pappy was up in the Manila area and he was required to depart with MacArthur, leaving his family in this village down on one of the southern islands, not knowing what was going to happen to them or anything.

He went to New Guinea, and was promoted to Major. He was put in charge of a bombing squadron. In those days the procedure was that the commander was given sealed orders that were not opened until they were in the air. On his first bombing mission he was airborne, leading his squadron, when he opened up his mission orders. They instructed him to go in and wipe out the village where he had left his family. Naturally, those preparing bombing orders did not know that his family had been left there, with other Americans. The village had been overrun by the Japanese and he had to go in and wipe it out. As far as he knew his family was still there. Being a good soldier he went in there and they wiped out the village.

It wasn't until after the war when he went back to the Philippines that he went down to the village, found it destroyed, saw this little boy wandering around and asked if there were any Americans in the area. The little boy said, "Yes, up in the hills there are some Americans living in a cave." He went up to the cave and he found his wife and two boys up there. What had happened was that the night before the bombing raid, the Filipinos had picked up intelligence that the Japanese were going to execute the Americans in the area. So, under the cover of darkness they moved the Americans out of town and up into the hills into these caves that the Japanese did not know about. The Americans stayed up there through the whole war. His family was sitting in the caves watching him bomb the village and not knowing that that was daddy up there who was wiping out their home.

So it was a great relief, but as it tends to be the situation frequently in wartime, when they got back together things did not work out well. The family had oil interests in Texas so his wife and the two boys went back to Texas. Pappy loved the Philippines, retired from the

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military, stayed there and opened a charter service called Philippine Aviation Development (PAD).

At the time, it was the only charter service in the Philippines. It was headquartered at the Manila airport. Pappy had been injured during the war and walked with a limp. He was not one to delegate so he was chief, cook and bottle washer for this company. He was the president, the manager, the officer director, the assignments officer, etc. He owned the place, his name was on everything.

At about the time I am speaking of, a group of seven American lumber people came out, representing various lumber companies in the United States, to survey the lumber industry in the Philippines. One of them knew Pappy and asked if they could use one of his planes to fly around the islands. Pappy said that he would take them himself. A friend of Pappy's was General Romulo's son, whom I had been to Georgetown with. He wanted to go along. So the nine of them got into this little plane and toured the Philippines. In coming back to Manila one evening, a monsoon rain hit - a horrible storm. Pappy was an accomplished pilot but somehow or other, was not able to get away from the storm and tried to come in through it. He crashed into a rice paddy and everybody was killed.

Well, I had the responsibility of the seven American lumber people. I had to go out and help collect the remains and whatever property could be salvaged. Pappy was an American citizen, and, since there were no next of kin in the country, I was responsible for him too. I hadn't heard about him until I was called by the police and told about the accident.

As a side line...one of the things that the police turned over to me was the wallet of young Romulo and I had the onerous task of taking that wallet to his father and saying that this was all there was left. All the remains were in pieces, nothing was intact.

When I looked into the holdings of Pappy Gunn I found out that he had this airline. I also found out that everything was in his name. I went out to the airport and spoke to his

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secretary and his attorney and was told that with his death everything in the company stopped. The insurance was terminated because everything was in his name, not the name of the company. I asked how many planes were out. Well, there were a dozen or more planes out on charter, etc. I called the Philippine Civil Aviation and ordered all the planes grounded. All business had to stop because I had no legal authority to transact business on behalf of an American deceased's estate. Shortly after that I was called into the Ambassador's office, Chip Bohlen. Chip was livid. He wanted to know what the hell I had done. I said that I had acted as a good consular officer protecting the estate of an American citizen and freezing all assets until the family could come out and take it over. He said, "Obviously you don't know what you did." I said, "I beg your pardon?" He said, "We are in the midst of a major election campaign in the Philippines. The only chartered aircraft are Pappy's and you have effectively stranded all of the principal candidates on islands around the Philippines. They have no way of moving. You stopped the whole election process in the Philippines. This is a major disaster and it is going to have serious implications for the United States." I just stood there dumbfounded. He said, "Do something about it."

Well, I went back down to my office and took the laws and regulations I had been doing research on and stuck them in the bottom of my desk. I then went out to the airport, got in touch with the lawyer and said, "Get some insurance papers drawn up. Let's get this business going again." I signed papers, got insurance, reinstated charters, called Civil Aviation and told them to get the planes flying again and got the Presidential campaign back on track. I ran an airline for ten days until one of Pappy's sons decided to come to the Philippines to take over his late father's interests.. I turned my office work over to someone else during this time. I stayed right out there at the airport knowing nothing about airplanes except having flown in them. I had to enter into new charters and conduct business on behalf of the airline.

In the meantime I had hired people to come in and do an inventory. Pappy had extensive parts bins in his storeroom, because a lot of these planes were World War II vintage

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planes, as he had stockpiled parts to make sure he could keep them flying. So the inventory process was tremendous.

I ran it until...none of his family were anxious to come out there. They had lots of money in Texas and this was just, they felt, a hobby of his. Eventually after ten days of communicating with the State Department, I was able to convince one of his sons to come out and take it over. That was one little experience I had.

Another one I had...you know courts in the United States can send questions to a consular officer to have a consular officer take a deposition from a witness in a foreign country, rather than bring the witness back to court. The process is that the court sends specific questions. You cannot deviate from those questions. You call the witness in. You swear in the person. You ask the questions. Transcribe the answers exactly as they are given. You can't ask any other questions. It is strictly what is on that piece of paper and the recorded answers. You have all that typed up, get the witness to read it and sign it. You authenticate it, put it under seal and send it to the court. Very, very rigid rules.

There was a case of a company in the Philippines that sold heavy equipment. They moved the equipment between islands on barges, etc. The insurance they had was out of a New York insurance company. They put in a claim for a barge that had gone down in bad weather off one of the southern islands off Mindanao. Everything was lost, very expensive equipment, about \$7 million involved. The insurance company wasn't satisfied with the whole thing. So they turned it down and the company went to court. The case was filed in New York because that was where the insurance company was. When it went before the judge the judge said, "Well, this all occurred in the Philippines. All the witnesses are in the Philippines. The headquarters of the company is in Manila." So, instead of asking for a deposition, the judge sent me an order authorizing me to conduct the trial in the Philippines.

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I had no law background, I was a consular officer. But he felt that consular officers were his representative out there. They are to perform functions on his behalf. He decided to have this whole case tried in the Philippines, completely transcribed and documented and all of the transcripts sent back to the court. Actually, it was a jury trial. Once the boxes of the transcripts were sent back to the court, the court clerk spent something like three weeks reading the transcripts to the jury. That was all they had.

To get back to the Philippines, when I got this, after extensive consultations with the Department and a local lawyer, etc. I set up a court room. I took our conference room...I had seen movies and was an expert. I had a platform built raising me up off the floor a bit. I had a skirt put around a table and went to Toast Masters International and borrowed a gavel. I set up a table in front of this platform and had one lawyer on one side and the other lawyer on the other side. They sent the insurance lawyer out from New York. The lawyer representing the company was based in the Philippines.

Here I am a youngster, 30 years old, and I was the judge. I had no power to make decisions but the power to conduct the case. It was fascinating. They brought witnesses in. The shepherd who was on the hill overlooking the area where the barge went down, tending his sheep that night...because he didn't understand dates and things they were able to describe the equivalent phase of the moon at that time and he was able to recall that the weather was perfectly clear and the water was not rough.

It was obvious all the way through that it was a fraud case, that this accident (sinking) had never occurred. What they had done was to scuttle a barge with a lot of rusted out junky equipment and then filed a claim for new equipment.

The case was conducted over a period of about three months. We had a hot-headed Irish lawyer from New York and this unethical, rather strong minded lawyer from the Philippines. The two of them would really go at each other across the table in front of me. One time they almost got to fighting...shouting at each other and so forth. I am thinking that these

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lawyers are much older than I am, much more mature, so, how am I going to get this thing back on track. I took the gavel and pounded it into the table two or three times, got their attention and said, "God damn it, either you two shut up and sit down and stop this right now or I will find both of you in contempt of court." I didn't know what authority I had. But it worked. They settled down and everything got back on track.

There were boxes of testimony afterwards. There are no court reporters in the Philippines other than the court reporters for the Philippine Supreme Court. I needed experienced reporters to record the testimony and transcribe it for me. So, what I did was to hire the reporters from the Supreme Court and had them come in during times when the Supreme Court was not in session. They did all of the transcribing for me. I literally had three cartons of testimony and records that I had to wrap and seal, (under consular wax seal) and mail off in the diplomatic pouch to the court. That was another interesting little event.

Others that are probably more common...one of them I like to talk about - what I call my Halloween adventure. I was called in the middle of the night by the Marine at the Embassy saying that an American missionary had called up and said that there was a problem with an American citizen living with them, and would I contact them. I called the missionary couple. They said that they were having a problem with this American who had been rooming with them and could I please come out. I asked if they could send him in to me in the morning. They said that they needed to solve the problem that night. I said, "Well, look, we are in the middle of a tremendous rain storm and it is late at night." They said, "You have got to come now." They started to get a little panicky. I figured I had better get out there and see what was going on.

They gave me directions to the house. I can only describe it as what I would imagine to be a typical British countryside. A narrow lane with high hedges on both sides. The car just fit down the lane. There were gates at various points along the hedges. It was pitch black with flashing lightning, clapping thunder and I was using a flashlight to try to see numbers on the gates. I finally came to the right gate. There was no place to park so I had to leave

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the car in the lane. I got out and went through this very short front yard, and knocked on the door. A man came to the door and introduced himself as "so and so", an American missionary. I went in and he introduced me to his wife. They said they had been living in the house for several years. It was really eery. A small place. I said, "Where is this person you are having problems with?" They said, "He is up in his room." I said, "Well, would you ask him to come down?" "No, you need to go up and talk to him." Well, there was a lot of back and forth and I was getting a little nervous. They finally convinced me to go upstairs. It was the first door on the left at the top of the stairs. I asked, "Are you are coming up with me?" "No, no, we can't go up."

I went up the stairs and knocked on the door. There was no answer. I tried the door knob and the door was unlocked. I opened it a little to look in and saw that there was no light in the room. I opened it just a little bit further and just as I did there was a flash of lightning that lit up the whole room. All I could see was blood all over the bed and brains hanging from the ceiling. I reached over and found the light switch and turned it on. I could see that what had happened was that this guy sat on the edge of the bed, put a rifle up to the roof of his mouth and blew his brains into the ceiling.

They knew this, but they knew that no one would come out or do anything if they told what had happened. So, they made it sound like the guy just had a problem and needed to be talked to. Of course, there was no air conditioning in the house. It was a typical Philippine type house. The windows were all open for ventilation and the rain had been beating in, etc.

I called the local police and the coroner and they came out and removed the remains, and did a cursory type of investigation. The next day I had to go out there and collect the property of this individual. The missionary couple asked me if I would clean up the room, etc. but I said, "I am sorry. I will take the property, but the rest is up to you."

Q: From Special Consular Services you moved to where?

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L'HEUREUX: To Passport and Citizenship.

There was one other particular incident. There were several cases where Americans died on the high seas. One of the favorite things at that time...the British were very big at this and the Americans to a certain extent...having passenger accommodations on freighters. There were twelve passenger staterooms to a freighter. They would have their own ward room, sitting room, dining room. Each passenger would have a private bedroom. Usually there would be a little swimming pool. It was a way for people to tour the world.

I had one woman one time tell me that she could live this way cheaper than being in New York, her home. So, as soon as she got back to New York - these trips usually lasted three months - she would stay a few days with her daughter until she could sign up on another ship and off she went again.

I went on board one ship and the group came up to me and introduced themselves around and said, "We are very proud of the fact that the youngest person in this group is 80 years old." Sometimes these elderly people would pass away on the high seas. If possible, the ship's captain would get permission from the next of kin in the United States to bury them at sea. Sometimes they would come into Manila with the remains.

One time I went on a ship, a woman had died about three days out. The captain met me and we went up to the stateroom. He had taped the entire door, sealed it because of the odor. He took the tape off and opened the door and I said, "After you." And he said, "Oh, no, after you." I went in and she had been laid out on her bed. The port hole was open and a couple of fans going, but no air conditioning or real ventilation. There was a horrible odor. I looked at her and I saw these two round things on her eyes. I asked what they were. The captain, a very proper British captain, said, "Those are British pennies. I placed those on her eyes after closing her eyelids in accordance with the instructions that I have in a book entitled 'Her Majesty's Manual On Death At Sea.'"

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I had to do such things like remove jewelry from the remains because the undertaker would not take the jewelry off and would not take the remains if there was any jewelry. What had happened to this woman was that she apparently had a heart attack or something and fallen at the sink. They had picked her up and laid her on the bed. I had to stay in the stateroom until the coroner removed the remains. The coroner insisted upon this.

One time I received a call from a steamship representative saying that they had a problem on one of their ships that had just arrived. I went down to the office and was briefed on the fact that the chef had gone berserk. A great big husky fellow who looked like a lineman on a football team. He had gone crazy two or three days earlier and had sliced up several of the kitchen help with a meat cleaver. The crew was all off the ship and he was still in the galley somewhere.

They had asked the Philippine police to go aboard and get him, but they were afraid to go. They said, "We are not going on that ship, we don't know where the passages are, where he might be hiding. We are not going to risk ourselves." So they decided to call the American consul...the salvation of all mankind.

I talked to the captain, trying to figure out how to handle this. I asked the police if they would go in with me, but they wouldn't. They would take him when he gets off the ship. I got a little background on him and then said, "I am not going to go on board by myself. I would like someone who knows the ship, so I don't walk into a trap." The first mate agreed to go on with me. We got on board ship and heading down below deck. Every time we came to a passage he said, "You go first, you are the consul." I ask what was on the other side of an opening, and he would explain to me, and then we would go through.

We finally got to the galley and I looked in and here is this guy sitting at the far end on one of the counters with the meat cleaver in his lap. He had apparently been sitting there for hours. He looked up and said, "Who the hell are you?" I said, "I am the American consul."

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Well, in shipping terms the American consul's name is magic. "Oh, Mr. Consul, I am so glad to see you." He gets up and started coming across toward me. I said, "Wait a minute. Stay just where you are. We have to do something first." "Mr. Consul anything you want, what is it?" I said, "You come halfway across the room and put that meat cleaver on the counter and then go back to the far end of the room. I will come in and pick up the meat cleaver, will pick it up and then we will leave the ship." "I am not leaving the ship." I said, "You are going to leave the ship, that is my order as the consul." "What are they going to do?" I said, "I assure you that you will not be mistreated. I will personally go with you to the police station and will see that you are properly treated. I will arrange for your return to the United States by air." Well, we had some back and forth over this. Finally he agreed. He came over and put the meat cleaver on the counter. I came in and picked it up and said, "Okay, now, you come on out here and we are going to leave." Well, he got to the door and started to go into the passage and said, "Mr. Consul, after you." I debated what to do, I didn't want that bruiser behind me, but I thought that was the only way he would do it. So, here I had to leave the ship with the first mate out front, then me and this guy behind me. Of course I couldn't have handled him anyway, he was so big. We get up on deck and he started getting cold feet. I finally talked him into going down the gangplank. The police were waiting down there and he was concerned that they have weapons. So, I called down and asked them to take their weapons and put them on a box over on the side. They agree. We get down and I said that I wanted the police to back off and that I was going to walk this man to the police station which was down at the end of the pier.

I walked him down there, chatting about his home, family, etc. We got to the police station and went in. They had already conveniently opened one of the cells. I walked over and told him that he had to go in there. He said, "I am not going in there." I said, "You go in there. I will lock it personally. I will keep the key and I will make sure that nobody does anything to you and that you get proper food." He agreed and went in. I locked the door and made like I was putting the key in my pocket. I eventually gave it to the police.

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By that time it was 1 or 2 o'clock. I said, "I don't want him mistreated. I don't want anybody going in there with him. I want to make sure that he gets food if he wants it. I will be back in the morning, I have to go get some sleep." I went home and came back the next morning and talked to him. He was fairly calm. Everything had gone well, he had eaten well. I arranged, in a couple of days, to have him shipped back to the United States.

Q: That is consular work.

HEUREUX: But they don't pay you for that sort of thing.

Q: Or train you for it either.

L'HEUREUX: One other quickly that I remember...a seaman that I had to discharge from a ship. He had been in fights, drunk, etc. Saturday morning I was asked to arrange for his discharge from the ship. Of course, I didn't do that on weekends unless it was urgent. I was a tough consular officer. I was very tough on shipping. I was the first consular officer in Manila in many years who demanded that the ship captains deposit their papers with me when they arrived in port. They would say, "Oh, we don't do that anymore." I would say, "The law says you do it and I am going to insist on it." I was known to be very hard-nosed.

Even though the company and the captain had asked me to discharge this seaman I wanted to talk to him first. So I arranged to have him come into the Embassy on Saturday morning. I was in my office. He came to the Marine Desk and was shown where my office was, just next to the Marine desk at the main entrance to the Chancery. He came in and we sat there talking for a while. I said, "Well, really, I have no choice. I am going to have to discharge you and send you back to the United States. If the company files charges, the Coast Guard will have to deal with it back home."

He started thanking me and stood up. In a split second he had a knife out of his belt and was lunging at me across the desk. At the same moment...I had a side door to the office...the door from the side corridor burst open and the Marine Gunny (sergeant in

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Charge) came flying through the air, landed on this guy, threw him to the floor, knocked him out and took the knife away.

What had happened was that when he came in the Marine at the front desk wasn't comfortable with the guy. He felt there was something wrong, that he wasn't stable. The Marine was concerned that he was going into the office with me alone. I had good rapport with the Marines. So he called the Gunny, who was in an office down the hall, and told him he ought to come over to keep eyes on things. The Gunny came around to the side door and just cracked it and was watching the whole thing. He saved my life.

So, those are some of the adventures.

Q: This is excellent. Great.

L'HEUREUX: In Passport and Citizenship there were no great shakes, just some minor irregularities, procedures that had to be written, etc.

The Visa side of the house was a little more complex because there I was getting into some fraud cases, etc. There are some little stories I could probably give you on that too.

Q: The things you have given me are excellent for the record for the type of thing that consular officers can end up doing. I thank you very much.

End of interview